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COUNTRY	East Germany/West Germany	REPORT NO.	CS DB-312/00445-68
SUBJECT	Current Status of East-West German Prisoner Exchanges	DATE DISTR.	28 February 1968
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SOURCE: Medium-level West German government official with good connections among officials in Bonn who are concerned with prisoner exchange. Source has had a long record of reliable reporting on this subject.

1. Negotiations for a new round of prisoner exchanges presently are at a standstill, supposedly because the East Germans demand that Heinz Felfe be released. The current exchanges involve family reunions and these are running behind schedule. The promised return of children to parents in West Germany has not transpired, however, apparently because the East Germans are now attempting for the first time to obtain a form of ransom payment for them.
2. In an 8 December 1967 letter to his West Berlin colleague Juergen Stange, East German lawyer Wolfgang Vogel claimed the East Germans made West German consideration of the Felfe case a precondition for all future negotiations.¹ He stated that the East Germans never would have agreed to swap (nu)Clemens for Volker Heinz² if they had thought the West Germans would be unwilling to release Felfe. Vogel demanded a decision before Christmas 1967. Stange passed the contents of the letter on to All-German Affairs Ministry representative Ludwig Rehlinger and to Berlin's Federal Affairs Senator Dieter Spangenberg.³
3. State Secretary Carl Krautwig, on 12 December 1967, sent Minister Herbert Wehner his analysis of the current state of negotiations and recommended that he not be influenced by Vogel's scare tactics. Krautwig maintained the Felfe case would not affect the exchanges in progress and said he believes the Catholic and Protestant churches stirred up the Felfe affair in order to pique East German interest in another round of prisoner exchanges. Krautwig concluded by

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S E C R E T
NO FOREIGN DISSEM /CONTROLLED DISSEM
-2- CSDB-312/00445-68

reminding Wehner that in November 1967, Justice Minister Gustav Heinemann had ruled that the Felfe case could not be considered until he had served at least another few years of his sentence.

4. Stange told Rehlinger subsequently he was certain that the Soviets are behind the demand for Felfe's release. He claimed that when Vogel was in Moscow in the spring of 1967 to negotiate Martina Kischke's release, Rudolf Abel told Vogel he was "an old friend of Felfe's and would like to see Felfe get out of prison." Stange also repeated this story to Spangenberg, who on 15 December 1967 spoke with Justice Ministry State Secretary Horst Ehmke about Vogel's letter and the alleged role of Abel. Spangenberg suggested that it might be possible to swap Felfe for the three West German students held in the USSR: Peter-Gerhardt Sonntag, /fnu/ Neumann, and Volcker Schaffhauser.
5. According to Rehlinger, Ehmke questioned the three Western Allies about this. The French and the British had no particular objections but, supposedly, the Americans turned it down cold. Spangenberg has since come up with the idea of including Peter Feinauer and Roland Wiedenhoeft, who are U.S. citizens being held in East Germany, in the swap so as, "To interest the Americans."
6. Protestant Bishop Hermann Kunst, acting also in the name of his Catholic colleague, Suffragan Bishop Heinrich Tenhumberg, wrote Stange on 21 December 1967 expressing their feelings about the Vogel letter. He took strong exception to Vogel's claim that Felfe was ever bound up with the Clemens-Heinz swap and stated he had never claimed he had any reason to believe the West German government would agree to Felfe's release in the foreseeable future. Kunst pointed out that when the last round of prisoner release negotiations began it was agreed expressly not to include any prisoner swaps because of the complexity of the Felfe case. Kunst wrote that he feared Vogel's demand amounted to a threat to release Felfe before Christmas or have the family reunions terminated. He concluded that Vogel's "wishes" did not have a chance of being accepted, but stated that he and Tenhumberg planned to pursue prisoner release negotiations in the future nevertheless.
7. Vogel's letter also included the information that the East Germans were "ready" to deliver the children the West Germans had requested. Vogel went on, however, to propose that the entire "child support account" (Pflegegeldkonto) in West Germany be turned over to the East German state bank, a sum of about 30,000,000 DM (US\$7,500,000). Up to the present the children have seldom been delivered more than one or two at a time.⁵
8. As of mid-January 1968 family reunions were still running far behind schedule and not more than half of the agreed-upon 1600 have been accomplished. The responsible officials grant that relocations of entire families are more difficult and time-consuming; nevertheless, Kunst included a statement in his 21 December 1967 letter to Stange accusing Vogel of having gone back on his promise to have all permits to the families involved ready for them by Christmas. Contrary to previous practice, commodity shipments were authorized before the family reunions were completed but after the prisoners were released. The commodity deals included an order for 2,600,000 DM (West) worth of copper from a Dutch firm; the Dutch firm is now having difficulty collecting from the West Germans.⁶

S E C R E T
NO FOREIGN DISSEM/CONTROLLED DISSEM
-3- CSDB-312/00445-68

1. Headquarters Comment: The standstill in current prisoner-release negotiations attributed to West German refusal to meet the East German demand for the release of Felfe was reported by another source in TDCSDB-315/00417-68. Vogel's efforts to obtain Felfe's release by bringing pressure on Johannes Voelckers, Chief of the West Berlin Senat's Office for All-Berlin Affairs, was reported in TDCS-314/00309-68, date of information 8 December 1967. A report based on intercepted communications indicated that as of 23 November 1967 Vogel linked the release of Felfe to further agreements on prisoner releases.
2. Field Comment: As reported in TDCSDB-315/02418-67, Vogel's memorandum to Berlin Senat official Johannes Voelckers stated only that no BND-agent cases would be considered until Felfe's release was discussed.
3. Field Comment: There seems to be every indication that Stange, Vogel and Rehlinger are conspiring to keep some prisoner exchange activity going even though there are almost no prisoners left to exchange. According to Source, Rehlinger recently completed a study showing that there could not be more than approximately 60 people remaining in East German prisons who meet the established criteria. Therefore, once the family reunions are realized, there is almost no one left to ransom. The exception is the children, whom Vogel seems to be trying to cover with his proposal concerning the child-care account. Stange and Vogel stand to lose a lucrative source of income if there are no further large-scale releases, nor does Rehlinger view the loss of this responsibility with equanimity. Recently he told an acquaintance he was thinking of leaving the government and going to work for private industry for this reason.
4. Source Comment: Parents with children still in East Germany are required to pay support costs to this account. The East Germans have never allowed the East German foster parents to collect the money, however, and it has remained in the account in West Germany.
5. Source Comment: Recent figures compiled by Rehlinger's office show that there are now only about 600 children who are still eligible to come to West Germany. The East Germans have held up the departure of the children for so many years that the majority of the children originally requested are now over age 18, which is the cut-off date.
6. Headquarters Comment: Another source reported in TDCSDB-315/00417-68 that as of 31 January 1968 the East Germans had broken the 1967 prisoner-release agreement.

S E C R E T
NO FOREIGN DISSEM/CONTROLLED DISSEM
-4-

CSDB-312/00445-68

in that the prisoners for whom ransom payment was made had all been returned, but 840 persons of the 1040 covered in the 1967 family reunification agreement had not been given permission to leave East Germany. Goods in the full amount agreed to in 1967 had been delivered to East Germany. The East Germans had not only refused to permit the 840 persons to leave but had stated they were willing to give the West Germans a refund. The source of the present report, however, heard from Rehlinger on 5 February that family reunions were still proceeding but very slowly and that some persons involved in family cases arrived in West Germany about 1 February.

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